



ArizonaSERVES Task Force

Friday, July 20, 2012
10:00 a.m. – Noon
Executive Tower, 1700 West Washington Street, 8th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions

Dr. Terry M. Crist, Chairman

Chair Crist welcomed Task Force members and guests at 10:10 a.m. in the 2nd floor conference room of the Executive Tower.

He spoke of the shooting tragedy in Colorado and reminded attendees of the brokenness of our world, asked for all attendees to continue to make a difference in our communities – even if it is for a single child – while we focus on children during our current season of effort, regardless of what we see happening in the world around us.

Attendees then joined in a moment of silence for the victims and survivors of the shooting tragedy. Billy Thrall then led attendees in a word of prayer.

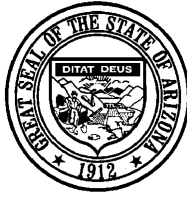
Tasya Peterson, Director of Communications for DES, announced that August is “Child Support Awareness” month. She distributed “Engaged at Every Stage” wrist bands to everyone in attendance and supplied Task Force members with copies of Governor Brewer’s proclamation, a letter from Veronica Ragland, the Assistant Director for Child Support Enforcement at DES, and a flier describing how the faith community can support Arizona’s children and families.

Chair Crist introduced three special guest speakers, each to talk about foster care.

Ms. Regeanna Mwansa shared part of her personal story and how her life has developed since her time in Arizona’s foster care system. She is a member of City of Grace Church in Mesa, and was featured in the ArizonaSERVES Foster Care video in the fall of 2011. During her 18 months as a foster child, she attended three high schools, had four case managers, and had three placements. To this day (16 years later) she considers her third placement to be her real family.

Several powerful comments during her talk were, 1) not only is a foster child hurting because of the separation from their family, they feel like they are living in a foreign land; 2) foster children are always wondering when the foster family is going to stop loving them; 3) foster children do not want to betray their birth family.

Regeanna also share several comments regarding her new family (the third placement), 1) I knew I was part of the family when they gave me a key to their house; 2) my new family never made me choose between them and my birth family; 3) after I “aged-out” of the system, my new family continued to pursue me.



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Mr. Brian Steele, Executive Director of the Phoenix Dream Center, spoke about the Dream Center's commitment to helping young adults who have just recently "aged-out" of the state's foster care system. His agency is developing curriculum to help teach these young people about family dynamics, life skills, and life purpose.

The program which is 15 to 18 months in length is also designed to address the issues of being "programmed out" ("I don't care for any more help, I'm done!") and being "program dependent." The Dream Center also provides housing and on site mentoring for these young adults. To schedule a tour of the facility please contact Brian directly at (602) 346- 8700.

Mr. Jon Katov, Founder and President of The Open Table, was introduced. He will be presenting later in the meeting.

II. Review and Action – March 16, 2012 Task Force Meeting Minutes

Chair Crist received a motion to approve the March 16, 2012 Task Force Meeting Minutes from Mark Upton, and a second by Cathi Herrod. Motion carried unanimously.

III. Staff Report

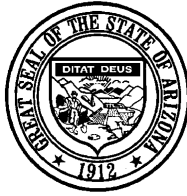
Chuck Fitzgerald spoke about Task Force activities since the March meeting. The specifics are detailed in the attached "Staff Report" document. He highlighted:

- 27 CPS family visitation rooms have been adopted
- "Wait No More" adoption statistics update
- Maricopa County's "Cradle to Crayons" Child Welfare Center's need for community donations
- Recent "Removals vs. Placement" distance data by county

IV. Success Stories

Billy Thrall provided a brief recap of the 2012 HopeFest Phoenix which took place at Chase Field in downtown Phoenix on April 14, 2012. There were 15,000 people served on that one day. Details will be available soon regarding the 2013 HopeFest. He showed a brief video, it is available here <http://youtu.be/iMpILH8eK7A>.

Mark Upton spoke about the live drama "A Life Connected" regarding foster care. This unique dramatic piece provides insight into what it means to be involved in foster care from a variety of viewpoints. Mark showed attendees a short video that may be found, along with more information, at www.cfcare.org.



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Chuck Fitzgerald and Billy Thrall spoke of the upcoming event "Caring for Our Children and Youth (when hungry, when in foster care, when in school)" being sponsored by the West Valley Human Services Alliance and CityServe Arizona. This one day event is the direct result of ArizonaSERVES's focus on Children.

The event will be held on October 5, 2012 at Living Streams Church in north central Phoenix. Registration and details will be available soon at www.cityserveaz.com. The save-the-date flier is attached to these Minutes.

V. The Open Table

Jon Katov, President

Jon Katov, the President and Founder of The Open Table (www.theopentable.org), spoke about the capacity of faith communities to move individuals and families out of poverty by way of entering into relationship with them. The Open Table model shows how the life experiences, life skills, and life purposes of faith community members are to be brought together in collaboration with a brother/sister in need to create success in the life of the brother/sister.

The Open Table model was developed in Arizona six years ago and has spread to a number of states across the country. Jon spoke of the role DES has had in the incubation, encouragement and support of the Open Table model since its inception. "Without DES support, the Open Table would not exist."

The Open Table model has a variety that addresses the needs and goals of young adults who have recently "aged-out" of foster care. Jon spent a few minutes talking about the unique characteristics of this population, and offered his organizations' assistance to the ArizonaSERVES Task Force as it continues to emphasize connections between faith organizations and the systems of care supporting children.

The materials Jon provided to attendees are attached to these minutes.

VI. "Undivided"

Chairman Crist

Chair Crist began a strategy discussion regarding the forward movement of the Task Force by showing attendees a diagram that included two overlapping circles. The diagram is attached to these Minutes. The first circle represents ArizonaSERVES and the five issues set forth by Governor Brewer, and the second circle represents the faith community and the three issues that seem to have the most energy in our communities. The overlap (foster care) represents our "front burner" effort, while the non-overlap areas represent our "back burner" topics.

There was much discussion about how we continue to place the emphasis of our work on foster care, while respecting and continuing the other four ArizonaSERVES issue areas. There was also discussion regarding joining forces with the faith community around other efforts (hunger, adopting schools, poverty) as we connect faith community with systems of care.



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Chair Crist received consent from the attendees to move ahead with this “front burner” work on foster care. Over the coming weeks/months more information will be provided by Chair Crist and Staff regarding next steps.

VII. Strategy and Planning Discussion

Discussion occurred during previous Agenda item. This topic will be carried over to the next meeting.

VIII. Call to the Public

IX. Closing Statements and Adjourn

Chair Crist received a motion to adjourn from Susan Corsaro-Johnson, and a second from Judith Fritsch. Motion carried unanimously.

Next ArizonaSERVES Task Force meeting is September 21st at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chuck Fitzgerald
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Office of Faith and Community
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Attachments

ArizonaSERVES and Children
ArizonaSERVES and “Undivided” Diagram
Caring for Our Children event flier
Open Table Overview
Open Table Presentation
Removal vs. Placement Distance Chart
Staff Report